

## Time use of millennials and nonmillennials

*The American Time Use Survey (ATUS) produces estimates about how Americans spend their time on an average day. This article uses 2017 data from the ATUS to compare the time use of individuals in younger generations (millennials) with that of individuals in older generations (nonmillennials). Time use varies greatly across one's life stages, such as those related to retirement, childrearing, or employment. This variation accounts for many of the differences in how millennials and nonmillennials spent their time in 2017.*

There is a national conversation about generational differences between age cohorts in the United States. Terms such as millennials, Generation X, baby boomers, the Silent Generation, and the Greatest Generation routinely appear in the popular press, social media, and other forums, to describe individuals born in particular years. Considering this interest, I use data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) to show how millennials and nonmillennials spent their time in 2017.



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### About the data

The ATUS provides nationally representative estimates on how, where, and with whom Americans ages 15 and over spend their time. In the ATUS, over 190,000 people were interviewed between 2003 and 2017 about their time use on a given day. For each activity reported, respondents are asked how long the activity lasted, and this information is recorded in a time diary. If a respondent reports doing more than one activity at a time (e.g., “I was watching TV while preparing dinner”) and cannot separate the activities into distinct time intervals, he or she is asked to identify which activity was his or her *main activity*, and this is what the interviewer records. Besides gathering data in the time diary, the ATUS collects information about household composition, demographics, labor force status, and more. Unless otherwise noted, all data presented in this article are from the ATUS.

## Defining the generations

Researchers have long studied the characteristics of different generations and the forces that shape those generations.<sup>1</sup> In this article, I focus on millennials and nonmillennials, comparing their time use in 2017. Using Pew Research Center guidelines, I define millennials as individuals born between 1981 and 1996, or those ages 21 to 36 in 2017.<sup>2</sup> I define nonmillennials as individuals ages 37 and over in 2017. Nonmillennials include members of Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1980), baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964), the Silent Generation (those born between 1928 and 1945), and the Greatest Generation (those born before 1928).

## Characteristics of millennials and nonmillennials

Table 1 shows selected demographic and other characteristics of millennials and nonmillennials in 2017. As shown in the table, millennials were more likely than nonmillennials to be of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Also, millennials more evenly comprised men and women than did nonmillennials, who were slightly more likely to be women. This difference is probably due to the larger number of women among the elderly. According to data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), women in 2017 represented 55 percent of the civilian noninstitutional population ages 65 and over. By contrast, women made up about 50 percent of those in the 25- to 34-year-old age group.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1. Selected characteristics of millennials and nonmillennials, 2017 annual averages**

Characteristics	Number (in thousands)		Percent distribution of population	
	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over
Total	68,315	165,012	29.3	70.7
Gender				
Men	33,906	78,055	49.6	47.3
Women	34,409	86,957	50.4	52.7
Race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity <sup>[1]</sup>				
White, non-Hispanic	41,696	113,866	61.0	69.0
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	6,990	21,201	10.2	12.8
Asian, non-Hispanic	3,475	6,533	5.1	4.0
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	14,936	21,008	21.9	12.7
Employment status				
Employed	54,272	97,569	79.4	59.1
Full-time workers <sup>[2]</sup>	44,310	78,771	64.9	47.7
Part-time workers <sup>[3]</sup>	9,962	18,798	14.6	11.4
Not employed	14,043	67,443	20.6	40.9
Usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers (single jobholders only) <sup>[4]</sup>				
\$0–\$600	12,898	13,522	33.9	21.3
\$601–\$940	10,023	14,391	26.4	22.7
\$941–\$1,440	8,608	16,124	22.7	25.4
\$1,441 and higher	6,468	19,478	17.0	30.7
Parents with children living at home				

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 1. Selected characteristics of millennials and nonmillennials, 2017 annual averages**

Characteristics	Number (in thousands)		Percent distribution of population	
	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over
No own household children under 18	41,387	124,500	60.6	75.4
Own household children under 18	26,927	40,512	39.4	24.6
Own household children ages 6 to 17, none younger	6,300	30,280	9.2	18.3
Youngest own household child under age 6	20,627	10,233	30.2	6.2
Marital status				
Married, spouse present	27,273	106,033	39.9	64.3
Other marital status	41,042	58,979	60.1	35.7
Educational attainment, ages 25 and over <sup>[5]</sup>				
Total, ages 25 and over	51,924	165,012	100.0	100.0
Less than a high school diploma	4,107	16,029	7.9	9.7
High school graduate, no college	11,660	51,799	22.5	31.4
Some college or associate's degree	12,660	39,162	24.4	23.7
Bachelor's degree or higher	23,497	58,021	45.3	35.2
Bachelor's degree only	15,733	34,670	30.3	21.0
Advanced degree	7,764	23,351	15.0	14.2
Enrollment status, ages 21 to 49 <sup>[6]</sup>				
Total, ages 21 to 49	68,315	52,608	100.0	100.0
Enrolled in school	11,189	1,894	16.4	3.6
Not enrolled in school	57,126	50,715	83.6	96.4

**Notes:**

[1] Estimates do not sum to totals because not all race categories are shown.

[2] Full-time workers are those who usually worked 35 or more hours per week at all jobs combined.

[3] Part-time workers are those who usually worked fewer than 35 hours or more per week at all jobs combined.

[4] The earnings data are limited to wage and salary workers ages 21 and over. Self-employed workers—both those with incorporated businesses and those with unincorporated businesses—are excluded. Each earnings range represents approximately 25 percent of full-time wage and salary workers who held only one job.

[5] Educational attainment is restricted to individuals ages 25 and over. (Millennials ages 21 to 24 are excluded from these estimates.)

[6] Enrollment status is restricted to individuals ages 21 to 49. The population of nonmillennials is restricted to individuals ages 37 to 49. The ATUS does not collect school enrollment data for individuals ages 50 and over.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey.

In 2017, millennials were more likely to be employed and to work full time than nonmillennials. Seventy-nine percent of millennials were employed (65 percent full time), compared with 59 percent of nonmillennials (48 percent full time). This difference is not surprising given that millennials were more likely than nonmillennials to be in their prime working years (i.e., ages 25 to 54). According to data from the CPS, the labor force participation rate for individuals in this age group was 82 percent in 2017, compared with just 40 percent for individuals ages 55 and over.<sup>4</sup>

Because most people have completed their formal education by age 25, table 1 presents estimates about educational attainment only for individuals ages 25 and over. A striking characteristic of millennials is their high rate of educational attainment at the postsecondary levels. Forty-five percent of millennials ages 25 to 36 had a

bachelor's or advanced degree in 2017, a rate significantly higher than the average of 35 percent for nonmillennials. Moreover, 16 percent of millennials were enrolled in school in 2017, which indicates that they were still completing their formal education. By contrast, only 4 percent of nonmillennials were enrolled in school.<sup>5</sup>

Among full-time wage and salary workers with only one job, about one-third of millennials (34 percent) earned \$600 or less per week, compared with 21 percent of nonmillennials. Seventeen percent of millennials earned \$1,441 or more per week, compared with 31 percent of nonmillennials. These differences in earnings partly reflect that millennials were in their early career stages relative to nonmillennials, who had accumulated more years of work experience. This interpretation is consistent with 2017 CPS data, which show that the median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers were considerably higher for those ages 45 and over than they were for younger workers, especially those ages 34 and under.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, according to 2016 CPS data, median employee tenure was generally higher among older workers than among younger ones. For example, the median tenure of workers ages 55 to 64 (10.1 years) was more than 3 times that of workers ages 25 to 34 (2.8 years).<sup>7</sup>

In 2017, millennials were more likely than nonmillennials to be in their prime childbearing years. Overall, 39 percent of millennials were parents living with their children under the age of 18, compared with 25 percent of nonmillennials. Not surprisingly, the percentage of millennials with children under age 6 (30 percent) was much higher than that of nonmillennials (6 percent).

## How millennials and nonmillennials spent their time in 2017

In the following analysis, I examine the average time use of millennials and nonmillennials. Employment status, parental status, and the age of one's children are key factors that influence how people spend their time. Table 2 presents the average hours per day millennials and nonmillennials spent on various activities in 2017, the percentage of individuals in each population who did the activities on a given day, and the average durations of the activities for those who did them on a given day. All estimates are based on an "average day" measure, which includes all people, whether or not they were employed, and averages figures for all 7 days of the week, including days on which people did or did not work.

**Table 2. Time spent on various activities and percentage of millennial and nonmillennial populations engaging in each activity, averages per day, 2017**

Activity	Average hours per day, civilian population			Average percentage engaged in the activity per day			Average hours per day for people who engaged in the activity		
	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over
Total, all activities	24.00	24.00	24.00	100.0	100.0	100.0	24.00	24.00	24.00
Personal care activities	9.48	9.68	9.40	100.0	100.0	100.0	9.48	9.69	9.40

See footnotes at end of table.

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	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over
Sleeping <sup>[1]</sup>	8.69	8.97	8.58	99.9	100.0	99.9	8.70	8.97	8.59
Grooming	0.67	0.67	0.67	79.8	82.3	78.8	0.84	0.81	0.85
Eating and drinking	1.19	1.13	1.21	95.0	94.5	95.3	1.25	1.20	1.28
Household activities	1.92	1.49	2.10	78.5	72.4	81.0	2.45	2.06	2.59
Housework	0.58	0.48	0.63	36.3	31.7	38.2	1.61	1.50	1.65
Food preparation and cleanup	0.64	0.56	0.67	60.4	56.6	61.9	1.06	1.00	1.08
Lawn and garden care	0.19	0.07	0.24	10.4	5.5	12.5	1.84	1.34	1.93
Household management	0.14	0.10	0.15	19.2	16.8	20.2	0.71	0.61	0.74
Purchasing goods and services	0.74	0.67	0.77	44.8	46.0	44.4	1.65	1.46	1.74
Consumer goods purchases	0.35	0.35	0.36	41.1	43.8	39.9	0.86	0.79	0.89
Grocery shopping	0.11	0.12	0.11	14.7	14.0	15.0	0.78	0.86	0.74
Professional and personal care services	0.09	0.05	0.10	7.6	5.3	8.5	1.13	1.02	1.15
Household services	0.02	0.01	0.02	2.1	1.1	2.5	0.74	0.67	0.75
Government services	0 <sup>[2]</sup>	0 <sup>[2]</sup>	0 <sup>[2]</sup>	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.85	<sup>[3]</sup>	0.88
Caring for and helping household members	0.56	0.91	0.42	26.0	35.7	21.9	2.17	2.56	1.91
Caring for and helping household children	0.43	0.80	0.28	21.4	32.9	16.6	2.01	2.42	1.68
Caring for and helping household children (except activities related to education and health)	0.38	0.74	0.24	21.0	32.7	16.1	1.84	2.25	1.49

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Time spent on various activities and percentage of millennial and nonmillennial populations engaging in each activity, averages per day, 2017**

Activity	Average hours per day, civilian population			Average percentage engaged in the activity per day			Average hours per day for people who engaged in the activity		
	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over
Physical care for household children	0.15	0.32	0.09	15.0	27.1	10.0	1.02	1.17	0.86
Activities related to household children's education	0.03	0.04	0.03	3.2	3.9	2.9	1.01	0.92	1.06
Reading to and with household children	0.02	0.03	0.01	3.0	5.9	1.8	0.52	0.54	0.49
Playing with household children, not sports	0.10	0.23	0.04	5.5	12.2	2.7	1.79	1.86	1.65
Caring for and helping household adults	0.05	0.02	0.06	6.0	5.2	6.4	0.78	0.37	0.92
Caring for and helping nonhousehold members	0.19	0.12	0.22	10.4	8.7	11.1	1.86	1.33	2.03
Working and work-related activities	3.84	4.61	3.53	46.4	55.5	42.6	8.29	8.31	8.28
Working	3.47	4.17	3.17	44.8	53.4	41.3	7.73	7.81	7.69
Educational activities	0.18	0.51	0.04	3.8	10.5	1.0	4.64	4.80	3.98
Attending class	0.06	0.18	0.02	1.6	4.5	0.5	3.84	3.97	3.29
Homework and research	0.10	0.28	0.02	2.9	8.4	0.6	3.39	3.35	3.61
Organizational, civic, and religious activities	0.33	0.20	0.38	14.3	8.7	16.6	2.30	2.31	2.29
Religious and spiritual activities	0.14	0.09	0.16	9.8	6.2	11.3	1.45	1.42	1.46
Volunteering (organizational and civic activities)	0.15	0.08	0.17	6.1	3.5	7.1	2.42	2.35	2.43
Leisure and sports	5.21	4.36	5.56	95.5	94.2	96.1	5.45	4.63	5.79

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Time spent on various activities and percentage of millennial and nonmillennial populations engaging in each activity, averages per day, 2017**

Activity	Average hours per day, civilian population			Average percentage engaged in the activity per day			Average hours per day for people who engaged in the activity		
	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over	Total, ages 21 and over	Millennials, ages 21 to 36	Nonmillennials, ages 37 and over
Socializing, relaxing, and leisure	4.73	3.79	5.11	94.5	92.4	95.3	5.00	4.10	5.36
Socializing and communicating	0.65	0.77	0.60	35.2	36.7	34.5	1.84	2.08	1.73
Relaxing and leisure	4.00	2.94	4.44	90.7	86.7	92.3	4.41	3.39	4.81
Watching TV	2.85	1.99	3.20	78.4	71.9	81.1	3.63	2.77	3.95
Relaxing and thinking	0.37	0.22	0.43	21.3	16.9	23.1	1.72	1.30	1.84
Playing games	0.21	0.36	0.15	9.7	13.0	8.3	2.16	2.77	1.77
Computer use for leisure, excluding games	0.18	0.18	0.18	12.5	14.2	11.8	1.46	1.29	1.55
Reading for personal interest	0.30	0.12	0.37	20.0	10.7	23.8	1.48	1.07	1.55
Sports, exercise, and recreation	0.28	0.33	0.26	18.9	21.0	18.1	1.49	1.55	1.47
Participating in sports, exercise, and recreation	0.25	0.30	0.23	18.1	20.0	17.3	1.40	1.49	1.36
Telephone calls, mail, and email	0.14	0.12	0.16	19.8	15.4	21.6	0.73	0.76	0.72
Other activities, not elsewhere classified	0.21	0.19	0.22	17.4	16.6	17.7	1.20	1.13	1.23

Notes:

[1] Includes naps and spells of sleeplessness.

[2] Estimate is approximately 0.

[3] Estimate is suppressed because it does not meet the American Time Use Survey publication standards.

Note: A primary activity refers to an individual's main activity. Other activities done simultaneously are not included.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey.

## Working

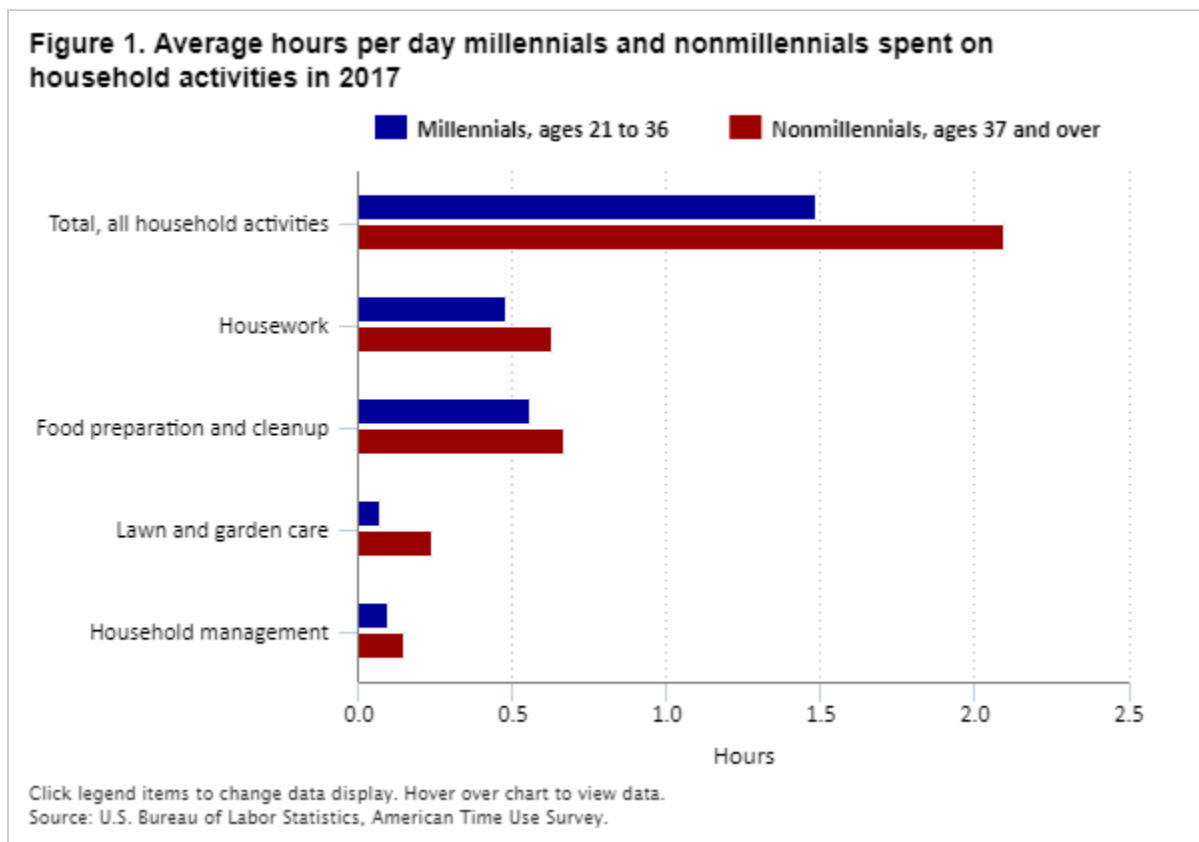
In 2017, millennials averaged more work hours per day (4.2 hours) than did nonmillennials (3.2 hours), because they were more likely to work on a given day. Fifty-three percent of millennials worked on a given day in 2017, compared with 41 percent of nonmillennials. This difference is not surprising given that millennials were more



likely to be in their prime working years and, thus, to be employed. However, the time millennials spent working per day on days they worked (7.8 hours) was not significantly different from that of nonmillennials (7.7 hours). (See tables 1 and 2.)

## Household activities

Figure 1 shows the average hours per day millennials and nonmillennials spent on household activities in 2017. Millennials spent 1.5 hours per day on household activities, less than the 2.1 hours spent by nonmillennials. Millennials were less likely (72 percent) than nonmillennials (81 percent) to perform household activities on a given day. In addition, on days they engaged in household activities, millennials spent 32 fewer minutes on them than did nonmillennials. (See table 2.)



## Caring for and helping household members

On an average day in 2017, millennials spent more than twice as much time caring for and helping household children (48 minutes) than did nonmillennials (17 minutes). Millennials were twice as likely (33 percent) as nonmillennials (17 percent) to spend time caring for and helping household children on a given day. On days they provided this care, millennials spent 44 more minutes doing so (2.4 hours) than did nonmillennials (1.7 hours). These results are reasonable given that millennials were more likely than nonmillennials to be parents, especially of young children. (See tables 1 and 2.) According to the 2017 ATUS, adults living in households with children under age 6 spent, on average, more than twice as much time per day (2.1 hours) as did adults living in households whose youngest child was between the ages of 6 and 17 (50 minutes).<sup>8</sup>



The time millennials spent caring for household children in 2017 was primarily spent on physical care and playing activities. Millennials spent 19 minutes per day providing physical care to household children, compared with an average of just 5 minutes for nonmillennials. They also averaged 14 minutes per day playing with household children, compared with an average of 2 minutes for nonmillennials. (See table 2.) Again, these results are consistent with the fact that the children of millennials tend to be younger. Moreover, according to data for 2013–17 from the 2017 ATUS, adults living in households with younger children spent most of their daily childcare time on physical care activities (47 minutes) and playing or hobby activities (35 minutes), whereas adults living in households with older children spent the largest share of their childcare time in travel activities related to the care of those children (10 minutes).<sup>9</sup>

Both millennials and nonmillennials averaged less than 5 minutes per day caring for and helping household adults in 2017. However, on days they provided this care, millennials spent considerably less time on it (22 minutes) than did nonmillennials (55 minutes). (See table 2.) This result likely reflects the older age profile of nonmillennials. According to 2015–16 ATUS data, adults ages 45 and over were more likely than younger adults to be eldercare providers.<sup>10</sup>

## Educational activities

In 2017, millennials averaged 31 minutes per day on educational activities, compared with just 2 minutes for nonmillennials. These estimates include the time spent attending classes and doing related work, whether for a degree or personal interest. Eleven percent of millennials engaged in educational activities on a given day in 2017, compared with just 1 percent of nonmillennials. (See table 2.)

These findings are supported by the fact that millennials were more likely than nonmillennials to be enrolled in school. Additionally, CPS data show that, in 2017, school enrollment was the highest (28 percent) for individuals ages 22 to 24, dropping sharply for each successive (older) age group.<sup>11</sup>

## Purchasing goods and services

On an average day in 2017, millennials spent 6 fewer minutes on purchasing goods and services (40 minutes) than did nonmillennials (46 minutes). Activities in this category include purchasing consumer goods, professional and personal care services, household services, and government services. On days millennials performed these activities, they did so for a shorter duration (1.5 hours) than did nonmillennials (1.7 hours). However, the opposite was true for time spent grocery shopping. On days millennials spent time grocery shopping, they did so for a longer duration (52 minutes) than did nonmillennials (44 minutes). (See table 2.)

## Organizational, civic, and religious activities

In 2017, millennials averaged about half as much time per day on organizational, civic, and religious activities (12 minutes) as did nonmillennials (23 minutes). This result largely reflects differences in the average percentage of people in each population who were engaged in these activities on a given day (9 percent for millennials, compared with 17 percent for nonmillennials). On days they did these activities, millennials and nonmillennials both averaged 2.3 hours doing them. Millennials were less likely than nonmillennials to engage in volunteer activities and in religious and spiritual activities on a given day. (See table 2.) According to the 2017 ATUS, individuals ages 55 to 64 spent more time per day on organizational, civic, and religious activities than

did individuals ages 25 to 34.<sup>12</sup> This result is consistent with data from the Corporation for National and Community Service, according to which roughly 28 percent of millennials engaged in volunteer activities in 2017, compared with 36 percent of Generation Xers and 31 percent of baby boomers.<sup>13</sup> In addition, CPS data show that while parents were more likely than nonparents to volunteer, parents with younger children were less likely to do so than were parents with older children.<sup>14</sup>

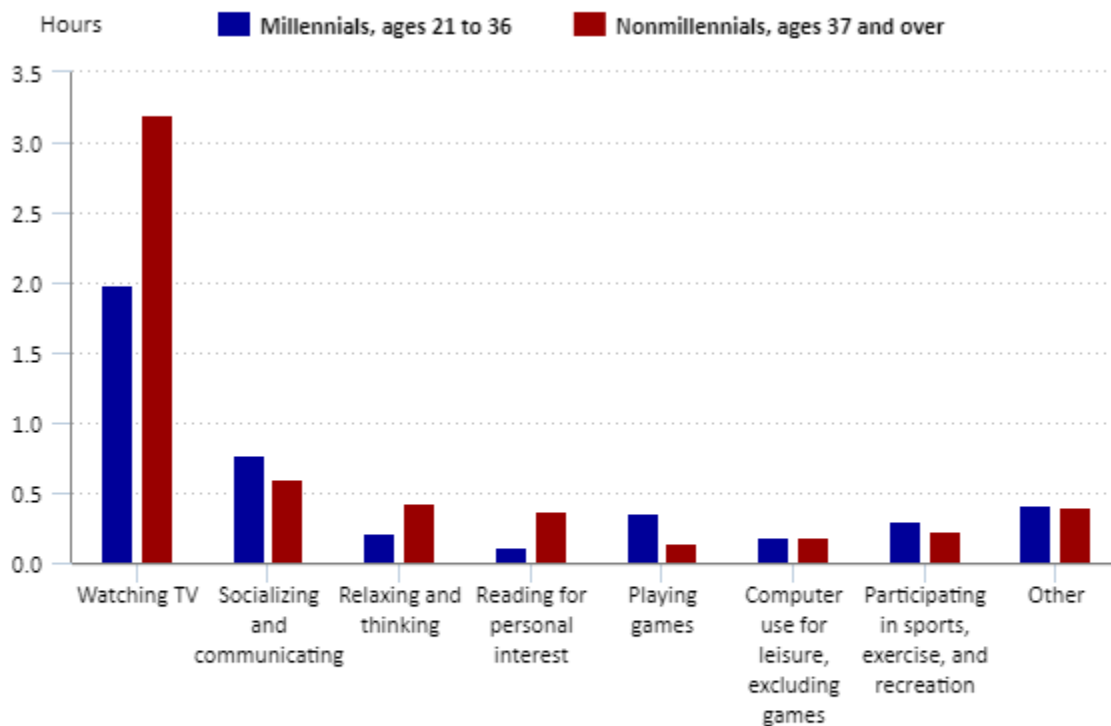
## Personal care activities

In 2017, Millennials spent 17 more minutes per day on personal care activities (e.g., sleeping, bathing, and dressing) than did nonmillennials. This difference was due largely to the fact that, on average, millennials slept 23 more minutes per day (9.0 hours) than did nonmillennials (8.6 hours). (See table 2.)

## Leisure and sports activities

Figure 2 shows the average hours per day millennials and nonmillennials spent on selected leisure and sports activities. On a given day in 2017, more than 90 percent of both millennials and nonmillennials spent time on leisure and sports activities. However, perhaps because they were spending more time working for pay and caring for their children, millennials averaged 1.2 hours less per day in leisure and sports activities (4.4 hours) than did nonmillennials (5.6 hours). Both groups spent the largest share of their leisure time watching TV (2.0 hours for millennials and 3.2 hours for nonmillennials). On a given day, millennials were less likely (72 percent) than nonmillennials (81 percent) to watch TV, and on days they did watch TV, millennials spent 1.2 fewer hours doing so (2.8 hours) than did nonmillennials (4.0 hours). Both millennials and nonmillennials spent the second-largest share of their leisure time socializing and communicating in 2017: millennials averaged 46 minutes per day, and nonmillennials averaged 36 minutes per day. (See table 2.)

**Figure 2. Average hours per day millennials and nonmillennials spent on selected leisure and sports activities in 2017**



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.

Note: "Other" leisure and sports activities include tobacco and drug use; listening to the radio; listening to or playing music (not radio); arts and crafts as a hobby; collecting as a hobby; hobbies, except arts and crafts and collecting; writing for personal interest; relaxing and leisure, not elsewhere classified; arts and entertainment (other than sports); waiting associated with relaxing or leisure; waiting associated with arts and entertainment; waiting associated with socializing, not elsewhere classified; socializing, relaxing, and leisure, not elsewhere classified; attending sporting and recreational events; waiting associated with sports, exercise, and recreation; security procedures related to sports, exercise, and recreation; sports, exercise, and recreation, not elsewhere classified; travel related to socializing, relaxing, and leisure; and travel related to sports, exercise, and recreation. Data are averages of estimates for all 7 days of the week.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey.

Compared with nonmillennials, millennials spent an average of 13 more minutes per day playing games.<sup>15</sup> Millennials were more likely (13 percent) than nonmillennials (8 percent) to play games on a given day, and on days they did play games, millennials spent more time doing so (2.8 hours) than did nonmillennials (1.8 hours). (See table 2.)

Whereas millennials spent more time playing games, nonmillennials spent more time reading for fun. In 2017, millennials averaged 7 minutes per day reading for personal interest, and nonmillennials averaged 22 minutes. Millennials were half as likely (11 percent) as nonmillennials (24 percent) to read for personal interest on a given day, and on days they did read for personal interest, millennials spent 29 fewer minutes doing so (1.1 hours) than did nonmillennials (1.6 hours). (See table 2.)

Millennials spent half as much time per day relaxing and thinking (13 minutes) as did nonmillennials (26 minutes). On days they spent time relaxing and thinking, millennials spent 32 fewer minutes doing so than did nonmillennials. (See table 2.)

Millennials averaged just 4 more minutes per day participating in sports, exercise, and recreation activities (18 minutes) than did nonmillennials (14 minutes). The two groups spent about the same amount of time using a computer for leisure (11 minutes). (Time spent using a computer for leisure does not include time spent playing games on a computer.) (See table 2.)

## Conclusion

Time use varies greatly across one's life stages—such as those related to education, childrearing, employment, or retirement—and this variation accounts for many of the differences in how millennials and nonmillennials spent their time in 2017. Millennials spent more time working, providing childcare, and performing educational activities than did nonmillennials. By contrast, millennials spent less time than nonmillennials on household activities; organizational, civic, and religious activities; and leisure and sports activities. These differences in time use reflect the fact that, compared with nonmillennials, millennials were more likely to be employed, to care for younger children, and to be enrolled in school.

### SUGGESTED CITATION

Michelle Freeman, "Time use of millennials and nonmillennials," *Monthly Labor Review*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 2019, <https://doi.org/10.21916/mlr.2019.22>.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Examples of such generational research include Geoffrey Paulin, "Expenditure patterns of young single adults: two recent generations compared," *Monthly Labor Review*, December 2008, pp. 19–50, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2008/12/art2full.pdf>; Anick Tolbize, "Generational differences in the workplace" (Research and Training Center on Community Living at the University of Minnesota, August 16, 2008), [https://rtc.umn.edu/docs/2\\_18\\_Gen\\_diff\\_workplace.pdf](https://rtc.umn.edu/docs/2_18_Gen_diff_workplace.pdf); and Jean M. Twenge, Stacy M. Campbell, Brian J. Hoffman, Charles E. Lance, "Generational differences in work values: leisure and extrinsic values increasing, social and intrinsic values decreasing," *Journal of Management*, vol. 36, no. 5, March 2010.

<sup>2</sup> See "The whys and hows of generations research" (Pew Research Center, September 2005), <https://www.people-press.org/2015/09/03/the-whys-and-hows-of-generations-research/>. Many U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics surveys, including the Consumer Expenditure Survey, follow the same guidelines.

<sup>3</sup> See table 3, "Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by age, sex, and race," household data annual averages for 2017 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), <https://www.bls.gov/cps/aa2017/cpsaat03.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> See data series for 2017 in "Labor force statistics from the Current Population Survey" (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), [https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU01300060&series\\_id=LNU01324230&periods\\_option=specific\\_periods&periods=Annual+Data](https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU01300060&series_id=LNU01324230&periods_option=specific_periods&periods=Annual+Data).

<sup>5</sup> These estimates are for nonmillennials ages 37 to 49.

<sup>6</sup> See "Highlights of women's earnings in 2017," *BLS Reports*, Report 1075 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 2018), chart 2, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-earnings/2017/home.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> See *Employee tenure in 2016*, UDL-16-1867 (U.S. Department of Labor, September 22, 2016), tables 1 and 2, [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/tenure\\_09222016.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/tenure_09222016.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> See *American Time Use Survey—2017 results*, USDL-18-1058 (U.S. Department of Labor, June 28, 2018), table 9, [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/atus\\_06282018.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/atus_06282018.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> See *Unpaid eldercare in the United States—2015–16 data from the American Time Use Survey*, USDL-17-1292 (U.S. Department of Labor, September 20, 2017), table 4, [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/elcare\\_09202017.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/elcare_09202017.pdf). Eldercare providers are defined as individuals who provide unpaid care to people ages 65 and older who need help because of a condition related to aging. This care can be provided to household or nonhousehold members.

<sup>11</sup> See “School enrollment in the United States: October 2017—detailed tables” (U.S. Census Bureau, December 11, 2018), table 1, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/school-enrollment/2017-cps.html>.

<sup>12</sup> See *American Time Use Survey—2017 results*, USDL-18-1058 (U.S. Department of Labor, June 28, 2018), table 3, [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/atus\\_06282018.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/atus_06282018.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> See “Demographics,” *Volunteering in America* (Corporation for National and Community Service), <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via/demographics>.

<sup>14</sup> Unpublished table 2 from the Current Population Survey’s “September 2015 volunteer supplement” (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics); available upon request.

<sup>15</sup> Time spent playing games includes time spent playing computer games, board games, and card games.

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